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President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 48

Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Report of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa (A/56/45)

Report of the Secretary-General (A/56/371)

Draft resolution (A/56/L.28)

The President: Before inviting representatives of Member States to speak on this important agenda item, I wish to make several observations on the urgent need for the international community to support the African States in their efforts to achieve durable peace and sustainable development. Chapter VII of the 2000 Millennium Declaration, while recognizing the special needs of Africa, pledged support for the consolidation of democracy in Africa and assistance for Africans in their struggle for lasting peace, poverty eradication and sustainable development. This commitment was seen as central to the vital task of bringing Africa into the mainstream of global development.

Currently, some 17 conflicts are ongoing in Africa. Almost half of African countries are directly or indirectly affected by conflict. While many African countries showed slow but steady economic growth through the 1990s, conflict-ridden States suffered negative growth. The tragedy of AIDS blights the lives of more than 23 million Africans today. Some 13 million Africans have already died and 10 million African children have been orphaned by AIDS. We must stop this trend and reverse it. In a world of accelerated globalization, the common prosperity of all mankind should be our objective.

In this regard, we greatly welcome the New Partnership for Africa's Development, an African-initiated and African-led framework for action to promote sustainable development, adopted by the African leaders last July. The New Partnership for Africa's Development draws its strength from the determination of Africans to overcome underdevelopment and marginalization. In order to guarantee the successful implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, the international community should do its part by providing, inter alia, increased private and public capital flows to Africa, market access expansion and debt reduction. I urge the United Nations system to provide the maximum support for African States and to help foster productive and mutually beneficial partnerships between Africa and the international community and civil society, including the private sector.

The General Assembly will continue to play a major role in assessing and monitoring progress in Africa and make necessary recommendations, mainly through the work of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working

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Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa, as well as through the preparatory process for the final review and appraisal of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

I now give the floor to the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.28.

Mr. Yussuf (United Republic of Tanzania): I am pleased to introduce on behalf of the African Group the draft resolution entitled "Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa".

The United Nations has always made its support for Africa's development a priority. Indeed, over the years, several initiatives have been unveiled by the United Nations on Africa. Central to these initiatives have been efforts to ensure coordination and coherence. In this respect, the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa constituted a major development in the way the United Nations should respond to Africa's development concerns. The report reflected acute awareness of the nexus between peace and development and made recommendations for a comprehensive and integrated approach to conflict prevention, poverty eradication and development.

Monitoring the implementation of those recommendations, as well as assessing progress made, is an important exercise to enable the United Nations to achieve its objectives regarding Africa's development. The draft resolution, in this regard, seeks to reiterate the crucial role of the General Assembly in this exercise. The forthcoming review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa and, more significantly, the adoption by African leaders in July of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, which provides a comprehensive and coordinated framework for Africa's development, have implications for the further implementation and monitoring of the Secretary-General's recommendations.

The draft resolution, while stressing the need for keeping the recommendations high on the agenda of the United Nations system and of its Member States, endorses the recommendations entitled "Suggestions for further actions and measures" contained in paragraphs 35 to 56 of chapter III of the report of the Working Group. Key among these recommendations is the decision to consider further measures for implementing and monitoring initiatives on Africa, including the ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council of 2001 on the basis of the New Partnership for Africa's Development. The draft resolution also requests the Secretary-General to submit to the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly a comprehensive report on implementation and on concrete measures required to ensure a well-coordinated and integrated approach to the full and early implementation of those recommendations.

More importantly, the draft resolution calls for the strengthening of political will to ensure the effective implementation of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report, including the two thematic areas where progress remains slow.

Finally, the Secretary-General is requested to designate the already established interdepartmental/inter-agency task force as the permanent focal point within the Secretariat mandated to monitor the implementation of the recommendations contained in his report. The draft resolution also requests that the interdepartmental/inter-agency task force be strengthened with the necessary human and financial resources to effectively discharge its mandate. It further requests the task force to provide annually to all Member States updated matrices indicating the current status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General.

Having said that, there is a change to the draft resolution. Operative paragraph 9 should read as follows:

> "*Requests* that the Secretary-General designate the already established interdepartmental/inter-agency task force as the permanent focal point within the Secretariat mandated to monitor the implementation of the recommendations contained in his report, and requests also that the task force be strengthened with the necessary human, managerial and administrative resources to effectively carry out this task;"

Since I have the floor, allow me also to read out the statement of the United Republic of Tanzania.

The General Assembly and its main bodies and other international organizations have recently focused much of their attention on discussing issues of conflict resolution, sustained growth and sustainable development in Africa.

Due to the seriousness of the matter, in July 2001 the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council on the role of the United Nations system in supporting the efforts of African countries to achieve sustainable development emphasized the need for the international community to resolve on an urgent basis the African crisis in the areas of peace, development and health. Last year's Millennium Summit also recognized the appalling situation in Africa and called for remedial action by all. It is in this light that we believe the root causes of Africa's underdevelopment and conflicts have come to be known and understood. The challenge before us is therefore to implement the various agreed measures aimed at addressing Africa's problems.

The report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/56/371 has identified a number of initiatives in the areas of conflict resolution, sustainable development and poverty eradication. While it is noted that progress is likely to be achieved in implementing the recommendations of the Secretary-General, there exist a number of problems that still need to be resolved.

The problems of Africa can be resolved through concerted efforts and partnership between the international community and conflict-ridden African countries. Our delegation therefore emphasizes the need for a sustained tripartite effort by African countries, the United Nations system and the donor community. This partnership should aim at supporting initiatives of Africa in the economic, social and security areas.

Internal conflicts continue to hamper efforts towards achieving economic and social development in some African countries. It is important that the international community increase its support for the mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution of the African Union and its subregional organizations. These mechanisms play a significant role in conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. Africa needs resources to enable the mechanisms to prepare better for the tasks of conflict prevention and resolution. Here we wish to emphasize that efforts being undertaken by African countries in this field should receive the increased support of the United Nations, the Security Council in particular, as well as that of other international bodies in general in the maintenance of peace and security.

Africa therefore supports the efforts being made to resolve conflicts in the Great Lakes region, in Angola, in Sierra Leone, in Somalia and in other African countries where such conflicts persist.

There is a direct link between conflict and the incidence of refugees and internally displaced persons. It is estimated that more than 7 million people are refugees or displaced persons in Africa. In our various interventions, we have stressed the need for the international community to increase its support for the refugees, as well as for the refugee-hosting nations. Moreover, a durable solution to the refugee problem entails the resolution of conflicts in the country of origin followed by repatriation and resettlement of refugees.

There are a number of measures being undertaken to assist Africa in its endeavour to achieve sustainable development. Critical steps have to be taken to address inadequate official development assistance (ODA) and foreign direct investment (FDI) flows and the debt burden confronting a number of African countries. However, we wish to reiterate that more needs to be done in these areas. Specifically, we wish to emphasize the need for our development partners to increase ODA flows from the current low levels to the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product.

The provision of ODA should be carried out in tandem with an increase in investments. Though many African countries have undertaken structural adjustment programmes and economic reforms, the flow of FDI remains dismal. There is a need for investors to respond positively to the efforts Africa is making at creating an enabling environment for FDI and economic growth.

A solution to the debt burden which many African countries continue to face has to be found on an urgent basis. Debt repayment drains valuable resources from the rehabilitation and construction of essential development infrastructure and programmes aimed at poverty eradication. We welcome the various debt relief measures taken by the donor community, particularly the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative. My country is

particularly grateful to the donor community for enabling it to join the three other countries that have reached the completion point. However, there is a need to relax further the conditionalities attached to HIPC so as to enable more countries to qualify for HIPC funding. We further appeal to donors to increase contributions to the HIPC Trust Fund so as to cater to increased demands for resources in the HIPC countries.

There is a need to address these issues of financial resources in a more comprehensive fashion so that a long-term solution for Africa is found. In this context, we expect that the special concerns of African countries will be taken into account at the International Conference on Financing for Development, scheduled to he held in Monterrey, Mexico, early next year.

For there to be accelerated development in Africa, the international community should direct its support to the area of technology transfer and education. The widening technological gap and the deepening digital divide between African countries and developed countries have been major impediments to development. We therefore call on the international community to strengthen efforts to transfer technology to Africa on concessional and grant terms, including information and environmentally sound technologies.

Africa recognizes that it is primarily responsible for its own development. Thus, our leaders recently adopted the New Partnership for Africa's Development based on a common vision and a firm and shared conviction that they have a pressing duty to eradicate poverty and to place African countries on a path of sustainable development. Africa realizes that there is much that the continent can do and should commit itself to do. In this regard, Africa agreed to strengthen democracy, entrench a human rights culture, end existing conflicts and prevent new ones, deal with corruption and be accountable for all actions.

In conclusion, Africa recognizes that its efforts alone, however determined, will not be sufficient to bring about the envisaged development. To this end, Africa expects its efforts, particularly through the New Partnership for Africa's Development, will be complemented by actions by and support from the international community in the true spirit of partnership.

The President: Before proceeding further, I should like to inform members that, in a letter dated 8 November 2001 addressed to me, the Permanent Representative of Iceland to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Western European and other States for the month of November, requests that the General Assembly hear in plenary meeting a statement by the observer of the Holy See on agenda item 48, "Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa".

In view of the importance attached to the issue under discussion, it is proposed that the General Assembly should take a decision on that request.

May I take it that there is no objection to the proposal to hear the observer of the Holy See on this agenda item?

It was so decided.

Mr. Belaoura (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Two years ago, Algeria, as the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), took the initiative to request the President of the General Assembly to establish the Working Group to follow up implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, published in April 1998. Our initiative was then based on two separate but complementary concerns. It was a matter, on one hand, of enabling the General Assembly, as the principal deliberative and decision-making body of the United Nations, to fully play its role in ensuring follow-up of the implementation of the recommendations contained in that important report of the Secretary-General. On the other hand, it was also a matter of giving greater visibility to the issues raised in that document concerning a continent where problems of peace and development are established priorities for our Organization.

The Working Group then held a series of meetings throughout the fifty-fourth and fifty-fifth sessions, during which it focused on certain themes chosen for each session. At the fifty-fifth session the Group focused particularly on problems of education and on conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building. The consideration of these questions followed the adoption of the Millennium Declaration, in which the special situation of Africa was given priority attention by the world's leaders. Thus, that consideration acquired special significance.

Today we are called on to carry out the first assessment of the Group's work and the recommendations contained in its report. Before contributing to this collective consideration, I would like, on behalf of the Algerian delegation, to express our heartfelt thanks to the President of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, Mr. Harri Holkeri, for his personal commitment at all stages of the Working Group's work and for the commendable efforts he constantly made for the smooth functioning and success of the sessions of the Group. We also thank the Permanent Representatives of Spain and Pakistan, Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, for having enthusiastically and skilfully conducted the work of the Working Group. We also thank Mr. Ibrahim Gambari and his secretariat team for their useful and highly appreciated contribution to the work of the Group.

The analysis and recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report are still fully relevant three years later, not only because they identified the synergy between peace and development, but also because they identified in a very forthright way the internal, external, old and current causes of persistent conflict in Africa and the need for active, substantive and regular African and international commitment to return the continent to the path of peace and growth. We will continue to recall the historical and political dimension of the African crisis and to stress our collective responsibility and common moral duty to do everything possible to meet the many challenges confronting the African peoples.

The two themes tackled in the Working Group during the fifty-fifth session — education, and conflict prevention and peace-building — provided us with the opportunity to pinpoint the structural difficulties confronting development efforts in the continent and, in certain instances, the impossibility of remedying some things because of prevailing conditions.

On the subject of education, certainly progress has been made in certain areas, and the international community has provided regular assistance to many African countries in this strategic area. Nevertheless, Africa continues to see the lowest school enrolment rates in the world and the greatest gender disparity in terms of access to education. The goal of access to education for all by 2015, agreed at the international level, is not feasible, according to the report, because of many factors, including the paucity of financial resources, the lack of educational equipment, the spread of AIDS and its devastation and the persistence of conflicts in some parts of Africa.

On the second theme, we note today with hope that the situation of many conflict areas in Africa is, on the whole, evolving positively, thanks to efforts that led to the conclusion of peace agreements between the parties, with various forms of support provided by the international community. The satisfactory deployment of the three most recent peacekeeping operations — in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone and between Ethiopia and Eritrea — has made it possible, among other things, to start to implement the agreements concluded, with a view to a lasting, peaceful settlement to the sort of crises that, not so long ago, led to devastating wars in the African continent. That shows the necessary complementarity between actions of African countries themselves and those of partners to resolve conflicts and maintain peace. A similar effort should be made in the area of post-conflict peace-building, to which the international community should give greater attention.

In addition to these specific themes and proposals formulated by the Working Group in order to provide responses to these major challenges, one constant element emerged from the many discussions and hearings held by the Group. This could be summed up as follows.

Despite progress made in recent years, Africa has not managed to put a definitive end to the scourges that undermine it, such as poverty, underdevelopment, disease and instability. Otherwise, how can we explain that Africa continues to have the largest number of people living below the poverty line, that its contribution to world trade has been stagnating over the last two decades at around the 2 per cent level, that the AIDS pandemic is ravaging Africa, where it takes 90 per cent of its victims annually? How else can it be explained that the African countries continue to languish under the weight of external debt, which consumes a substantial portion of their revenues and diverts precious resources that could have been used for development projects, and that the digital divide continues to expand, increasingly leaving Africa at the margin of information technologies and the new economy?

Ministerial and summit meetings, interactive debates, round tables, high-level segments and specialized conferences — Africa has been, in the past

10 years, on the agenda of many international and regional meetings that have taken up the question of peace and development in the continent. The United Nations and development partners have also launched a series of initiatives for Africa. The situation of the African continent has been analysed in detail, its causes have been clearly identified and remedies have been identified and proposed. But the essential thing is that effective changes on the ground have not met the legitimate expectations of the African countries and peoples.

Despite this rather discouraging picture, the African peoples and leaders have consistently reaffirmed their unequivocal determination to assume their responsibilities and to meet the many challenges that they confront. The gradual establishment, starting this year, of the new African Union is part of this qualitative leap that Africa has decided to make. In so doing, Africans, for whom the new African Union opens up real prospects and new challenges, are determined to do everything possible to make the Union not just a copy of the OAU, but rather an opportunity to seize and a tool for development, solidarity, cooperation and continent-wide integration.

This is the point of the New African Initiative that was adopted at the Lusaka Summit, which later became the New Partnership for Africa's Development. Conceived as a comprehensive framework for all of Africa's efforts and the efforts of its partners, this New Partnership, elaborated by the Africans themselves, is a unique synthesis of Africa's commitment, vision and ambition in terms of peace, security and economic and social development. The emphasis placed on universally shared values, such as democracy, human rights and good governance, attests to the level of commitment of Africans to promote societies where respect for liberties, the need for transparency and the primacy of law are the rule.

That said, the peoples of Africa expect the international community to play its part: we need a further meaningful leap forward in the form of political and moral commitment commensurate with the challenges. And we need effective contributions in the form of technical assistance, financing and investment to make a success of this important enterprise.

We anticipate that, with our partners in the United Nations and in other forums, we shall look for the best ways and means to promote this African initiative, the best ways to mobilize the necessary financial resources and to gain the interest of other important private sector and civil society actors apart from the United Nations and the United Nations system. The world cannot enter the new millennium with an Africa that is lagging behind; where there is constant conflict and instability; where disease, in particular HIV/AIDS, is causing such devastation; where poverty and destitution are the daily lot of millions of men and women; and where debt is cancelling out any real growth. Without coherent action that will make a difference in those areas, we will continue to endure alibis and futile promises.

In its report (A/56/45), the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa recommends that the Assembly suspend the activities of the Group during the fifty-sixth session and that the Interdepartmental/Inter-Agency Task Force be strengthened in order to enable it to follow up the recommendations contained in the reports of the Secretary-General. Algeria participated in the drafting and adoption of that important recommendation, and we believe that this pause in the work of the Group should be used to enable the Secretary-General to focus in 2002 on a final review of UN-NADAF and on follow-up to the Ministerial Declaration adopted by the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council on Africa.

Finally, I reaffirm our support for the strengthening of the Task Force, headed by Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, Under-Secretary-General and Adviser on Africa, whose skill and experience were particularly appreciated by the Working Group throughout its work. We hope that the work of the Working Group on the causes of conflict in Africa and the promise held out by the new world context and by the upcoming international meetings can all be used effectively to implement the recommendations of the Secretary-General and to encourage the launching, through the New Partnership for Africa's Development, of a genuine partnership for peace and development in Africa.

Mr. Bishnoi (India): We thank the Secretary-General for document A/56/371, in which he reports on the progress of the implementation of the recommendations contained in his April 1998 report (A/52/871) on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in

Africa. We also thank the Permanent Representatives of Spain and of Pakistan for their work as co-Vice-Chairmen of the Assembly's Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa, and would like to place on record our appreciation for the report (A/56/45) of the Group.

It has always been our conviction that Africa knows its own problems better than anybody else and that its understanding of the situation cannot be replaced by that of others. Africa also knows the solutions to its problems. These have been articulated clearly by it over the years, most recently in the New African Initiative, now renamed as the New Partnership for Africa's Development, which was adopted in July 2001. What Africa requires, and what is incumbent on the international community, is that the international community support it in the solutions which it has identified.

Chapter II of the Secretary-General's report deals with the interventions of the United Nations system in peacekeeping, peacemaking and peace-building. We support such interventions so long as they support Africa's own initiatives. We are aware that there is, at times, a temptation to micromanage the affairs of others. This eliminates the real causes of neither conflict nor arrested development, and it fails to satisfy both donors and recipients. It should be recognized that there is no one standard formula which can be applied to situations that have different economic, social and cultural complexities. Assistance should be untied, not only with regard to the sources of goods and services but also with respect to advice.

Good governance is one of the two pillars identified in the Secretary-General's report for promoting peace and sustainable development in Africa. We ourselves attach great importance to good governance in the movement away from political, economic and social oppression, when it springs from within a society that is developing and when it is in harmony with local cultures and values. External intervention to promote good governance, however, produces good results only in exceptional cases. It nearly always results in a downgrading of the social welfare and economic growth agenda of the assistance package. It also has the paradoxical effect of reducing the capacity of recipient countries for policy-making and implementation.

Economic growth has led to peace and sustainable development in other parts of the world. It could in Africa as well. If there is one standard formula which we believe can be applied to situations with different economic, social and cultural complexities, it is that. It is also a formula with which Africa and all developing countries of the world can completely identify with.

Economic growth requires capital accumulation. But countries which find it difficult to meet the basic needs of their peoples cannot realistically hope to increase their domestic savings rates. The solution, we are told, lies in private capital flows. Experience, however, tells us that foreign direct investment follows economic growth rather than leading it. Nor can debt relief be a solution by itself. Even if all the countries in sub-Saharan Africa were brought under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative and were granted full and immediate relief of their official debt, the amount released would be less than half of their external financing requirements. The inescapable conclusion is that official development assistance, in the form of long-term development assistance, remains vital for the renewal of the continent.

The international community does not need to reinvent the wheel for Africa. The priority sectors have been identified in the New Partnership for Africa's Development. A focus on those priorities — infrastructure, health, education, agriculture and diversification of production and exports — is essential if Africa is to achieve the agreed international development goals.

India has always attached the highest priority to its cooperation with Africa. A principal instrument of our technical cooperation with Africa is the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme. About 20,000 foreign nominees, primarily from Africa, have received training in India in diverse fields including banking, foreign trade, hydrology and water resources, communications, electronics, satellite imaging, agriculture, small and medium enterprises, software, renewable energy sources and other areas. We provide a total of 1,350 training slots every year in some of our best educational institutions; of these, nearly 60 per cent are for nominees from African countries. India has always believed that the gains obtained by its pursuit of economic, scientific and technological self-reliance should be shared with its

developing country partners, particularly those in Africa.

India has also participated in each and every United Nations peacekeeping operation established in Africa, including some of the most difficult ones: in the Congo, Somalia, Angola, Sierra Leone and now the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That is proof of our commitment to peace in Africa. We also support all initiatives to strengthen African peacekeeping capacity, and we have contributed to this through bilateral cooperation programmes. Many African military officers attend professional courses in staff colleges and other training institutions in India, including in the recently established Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping in New Delhi.

Africa is the birthplace of humanity and the cradle of civilization. It has served humanity for centuries as a resource base. Its resources have contributed to the economic development of the rest of the world. Colonialism, however, kept Africa itself economically impoverished for centuries. Subsequently, shortcomings in the international trading and financial environment have not allowed the continent to realize its own potential.

There can be no doubt about the moral obligations of the international community. Globalization has created the opportunity for lifting millions out of poverty. It is now up to the international community to guide the globalization agenda so that its benefits are spread more equitably, and for the cause of economic growth, sustainable development and peace in Africa.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): In our statement on this issue last year, my delegation hailed the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa as a landmark in the way it showed the link between peace and development. This link was again echoed in many of the statements by the leaders of delegations during the recent general debate of the General Assembly. In fact, the tragic events of 11 September seemed to have reawakened extensive debate on the interlinkages between peace, security and development.

It was thus fitting that the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group this year devoted its time and attention to the issues of education, conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building.

South Africa believes that there is an inextricable link between peace, democracy and development. Therefore, in our view, the prevention of conflict within States requires that we work towards the establishment of solid institutions of democratic governance that protect the rule of law and promote fundamental human rights, including the right to development. The responsibility for achieving these goals rests primarily with States and their national governments. In Africa, we are beginning to make great strides in our efforts to achieve peace, democracy and development. These efforts are facilitated by the growing realization among African leaders that the continent's destiny can no longer rely on the goodwill of others and that development cannot take place without peace.

Through the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), African countries have resolved to enhance African institutions in support of actions to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts. Furthermore, Africans are resolved to enhance continental capacities in peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace enforcement, post-conflict peace-building and combating the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

While Africans are taking the lead in responding to the conflicts besetting the continent, it must also be made clear that our initiatives will require political, moral and material support from the international community. The United Nations is certainly well placed to coordinate and lead international efforts in this regard.

There is common agreement with the Working Group on the significance of education to ensure a balanced approach to the triangle of peace, democracy and development. My delegation, therefore, attaches great importance to the role of education in addressing the plight of Africa. We are thus in full agreement with the Working Group's assessment of the critical role of education in addressing the challenges faced by Africa. We also endorse the Working Group's determination of the wide range of issues in which education can make an important contribution, which includes dealing with the challenges of globalization and poverty eradication: development of technical, vocational and professional skills to respond to the knowledge-based economy and society; employability in a globalized world economy; contribution to science and technology; preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS; preventing and managing

conflicts; and promoting peace and sustainable development.

It is because of the all-encompassing impact of education, as recognized by the Working Group, that it has been highlighted as one of the priority areas of the New Partnership for Africa's Development. It is envisaged that human resource development through education will be the core ingredient in taking many of the initiatives in NEPAD forward. Africa will be looking at all levels of education on the continent, from primary to tertiary.

It is heartening to see the wide-ranging support already provided to the countries in Africa. These include efforts focused on promoting girls' education, technical and vocational education, the promotion of science education, and education for a culture of peace, human rights and democracy.

We still have a long way to go to reach the targets set for 2015, and the current enrolment rates for primary education, especially among girls, are not encouraging. However, we have to remain focused and committed in our efforts. There could hardly be a more noble partnership than that of sharing knowledge which will contribute to the social, economic and material uplifting of the individual and thereby the family, the community and society as a whole.

My delegation places a high priority on the role that technology, particularly information and communication technology, can play in the promotion of education in our country and in the rest of our continent. It opens vast new possibilities as it multiplies efforts. It substantially improves economies of scale in the education field and significantly enhances its reach through distance learning. The conclusions reached at the coordination segment of the Economic and Social Council in July on the role of information and communication technology, and the establishment of the ICT Task Force, are important in their promotion of technology transfer in support of development and, in particular, to enhance education.

But in view of the enormous challenges facing the continent, especially in post-conflict situations, and considering the important contribution to be made by education to conflict prevention, post-conflict peace-building and development, African countries need massive resources, from both domestic and international sources. Mobilization of resources through domestic measures and through official development assistance and trade will be of great significance.

However, the drain on resources caused by the continuing debt overhang, which seems to be worsening with the current international economic downturn, is untenable. It is difficult to explain how, even after the implementation of the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative, 10 African HIPCs will still be spending more on debt servicing than on primary education and health combined. We will have to address this indefensible situation through a new and in-depth evaluation of the debt sustainability definition and a reassessment of the growth projections that underpin the design of the enhanced HIPC debt initiative.

The report of the Ad Hoc Working Group certainly provides important benchmarks for the kind of cooperation that may be required to realize international support and my delegation fully concurs with the recommendations of the Group to the General Assembly. We also support the proposal that the activities of the Working Group be suspended for one year to allow the appropriate attention to be given to the review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and the follow-up to the Ministerial Declaration adopted by the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council this July. My delegation further endorses the proposals to bolster the support structures in the Secretariat to ensure that this issue receives its due attention. It is therefore essential that the next session of the Working Group consider its work in the context of the new partnership framework recently adopted by African leaders, as has been proposed by the Working Group.

Mr. Kpotsra (Togo) (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly's annual consideration of the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa prompts us this year to consider the progress that has been achieved in implementing those recommendations in the two areas that have been chosen by the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa: education for durable peace and sustainable development, and conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building.

Before I continue, I wish to extend the congratulations of my delegation to the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session, Mr. Harri Holkeri, and especially to Ambassadors Shamshad Ahmad of Pakistan and Inocencio Arias of Spain, Vice-Chairmen of the Ad Hoc Working Group, for their leading role in conducting the Group's work this year.

The noteworthy contribution of the Secretary-General and, in particular, the excellent support given by Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, Under-Secretary-General and Adviser on Africa, in conducting the work and the drafting of the report under consideration also deserve everyone's appreciation.

At the Millennium Summit, the heads of State and Government made a commitment to guaranteeing education for all by the year 2015 and to eliminating gender disparities in education by 2005. It was in the light of those objectives that the Ad Hoc Working Group sought to assess the efforts made in the implementation of the recommendation in the Secretary-General's report concerning investment in human resources. In a very timely way, the Group also focused on the assets that education can bring to Africa in order to help it to confront today's challenges.

Having concluded its deliberations, the Ad Hoc Working Group notes with concern that, although the efforts made by the United Nations system, the African countries themselves and the international community are praiseworthy,

> "human resource capacity in many African countries remains weak and inadequate to respond to the challenges of the twenty-first century" (*A/56/45, para. 18*).

It therefore considers that

> "persistently low enrolment rates ... at all levels of education, together with the deterioration in the quality of education can, among other things, undermine economic growth and sustainable development" (ibid.).

Further on, the Group adds that, notwithstanding some progress in this area, a number of factors, which it attempts to identify, constrain the implementation of the Secretary-General's recommendation.

My delegation firmly supports the measures and initiatives advocated by the Ad Hoc Working Group with respect both to the objectives prescribed for education, the development of skills required by the new world economy and the contribution to the efforts of the African countries in their struggle against the AIDS pandemic, malaria and tuberculosis, and to the necessary massive contribution of financial resources. In agreement with the Ad Hoc Working Group, my delegation believes that the contribution of resources alone will not facilitate access to education for a larger number of people and that, along with sound management of public affairs, wise policies must be adopted.

Given the number of conflicts that are hampering Africa's development, the Ad Hoc Working Group wisely decided this year to choose as its second theme of discussion the question of conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building. With respect to the efforts made in this area, it notes the important role that the United Nations continues to play in the prevention and settlement of conflicts and in the maintenance of peace in Africa.

Mr. Sevilla Somoza (Nicaragua), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Considering that conflict prevention in general and development of effective preventive mechanisms remain a key priority area for the United Nations, the Ad Hoc Working Group mentions an initiative of the Secretary-General that, in many ways, is one of the most far-reaching initiatives of the United Nations to develop a coordinated and global approach to conflict prevention. I am speaking here of the establishment of an Inter-Agency Task Force for West Africa and the dispatch of a mission to that region in March 2001. In that regard, I wish to pay a particular tribute to the Secretary-General for his decision, recently endorsed by the Security Council, to ensure the opening in Dakar by January 2002 of the new Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa. My country, whose commitment to peace and stability is well known, will spare no effort in providing the Office and the Special Representative all the necessary cooperation and assistance.

Having stressed the many initiatives undertaken by African countries individually and through their regional organizations to prevent conflict and maintain peace and security on the continent, the Ad Hoc Working Group urges the international community wholeheartedly to support the activities of regional and subregional organizations. Moreover, considering that

post-conflict peace-building is a crucial element of conflict prevention — of which it is an integral part — the Group again requests greater financial support for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes and reiterates its proposal

> "that the funding of such programmes through the regular budget of peacekeeping operations be given adequate consideration as an alternative approach to an effective and permanent solution to the shortfall in resources" (ibid., *para. 52*).

However, apart from the concrete proposals of the Ad Hoc Working Group, what stands out is its insistence on the need for a comprehensive approach. A comprehensive approach is needed in order to better address the deep-rooted causes of conflict and the sources of potential conflict. All partners must adopt a coordinated and comprehensive approach to support growth aimed at eliminating poverty, ensuring development, supporting reconstruction and recovery and promoting peace-building efforts. Finally, the General Assembly must call on the Economic and Social Council

> "to focus more on the economic, social and humanitarian dimensions of conflict prevention and peace-building, with a view to improving coordination of activities in these areas, including through contacts between the relevant United Nations intergovernmental bodies" (ibid., *para. 55*).

I cannot conclude without welcoming once again the rigorous approach followed by the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group in assessing the progress achieved in the two areas concerned. It is certainly that marked sense of rigor and the desire to follow a comprehensive, coherent and coordinated approach in all cases that prompted it to propose to the General Assembly that the Group suspend its activities during the fifty-sixth session in order to allow for a review of new measures to implement and follow up initiatives related to Africa, given the upcoming review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and related initiatives, which should be guided by the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

My delegation supports that recommendation, as well as the recommendation to assign the special Interdepartmental/Inter-Agency Task Force the functions of a permanent focal point within the Secretariat in order to monitor the implementation of the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. However, in the spirit of transparency, the composition of that Task Force must be made known to everyone.

Ms. Tan (Singapore): My delegation would like to commend Ambassador Shamshad Ahmad of Pakistan and Ambassador Inocencio Arias of Spain, the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, for their untiring efforts in chairing several meetings and in producing the Group's report. Singapore concurs with its recommendations. We also thank the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries for providing its invaluable support and expertise to the work of the Working Group.

It has been more than three years since the issuance of the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. Given the comprehensiveness of the latest progress report, it is clear that considerable progress has been achieved in implementing the recommendations contained in the 1998 report.

We are happy that this year our Working Group focused on two fundamental areas: education, and conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building. From our own experience in South-East Asia, we have found that sustained economic growth is difficult, if not impossible, without enduring peace and stability as well as a strong commitment to investing in human resources.

We are pleased that there continues to be strong international recognition of the special needs of Africa. That commitment was reiterated at the highest level with the Millennium Summit Declaration, adopted by our leaders last year. That commitment is strengthened when we learn of positive developments in Africa that tend to be overlooked when the news media reports predominantly on the negative news of the continent. For example, over the period 1990 to 1999, gross domestic product growth in more than 10 sub-Saharan African countries averaged a steady 3 to 4 per cent annually. Star performers like Uganda and Mozambique averaged 7.2 per cent and 6.2 per cent, respectively.

The recent World Bank study of 10 African economies entitled *Aid and Reform in Africa* provides evidence that given the right conditions, economic growth and poverty reduction can be achieved. The report highlights the examples of Uganda and Ghana, which it classifies as successful reformers. While the study recognizes the importance of aid, its findings show that the successes in these two countries were primarily the result of enlightened domestic policies adopted by the leadership. In fact, when they started out reforms, their aid levels vis-à-vis other African countries were lower, and financial support took off only as policies developed.

Those are instructive lessons. The key question, as always, remains whether the international community and African countries can work together and mobilize the necessary political will to respond effectively to interrelated political, economic, humanitarian and social crises faced by the continent.

We have had other good news lately. There have been increasing signs that African leaders are determined to act together to change the fate of their peoples. Regional leaders have come together to solve security problems within their regions — with some success, as has been the case with the conflicts in the Great Lakes region. More significantly, African leaders embarked on a bold new approach in pan-African cooperation this year when, at the thirty-seventh Organization of African Unity (OAU) summit, held in Lusaka, they endorsed the formation of the African Union. They also adopted the New African Initiative — since renamed the New Partnership for Africa's Development — which, in the Initiative's own words, African countries aim "to extricate themselves and the continent from the malaise of underdevelopment and exclusion in a globalizing world".

President Frederick Chiluba of Zambia, who, as the incoming Chairman of the OAU, will preside over the transition of the OAU to the African Union, indicated clearly Africa's appreciation of the urgency of the tasks when he observed that

> "Africa does not have the luxury of time. If we procrastinate ... time will pass us by."

This sense of commitment, determination and urgency among African leaders should be applauded and supported by the international community.

While the formation of the African Union is a welcome development, subregional organizations such as the Southern African Development Community and the Economic Community of West African States continue to play important roles. As can be seen in the progress reports of the Secretary-General, both organizations have been at the forefront of conflict mediation and peacekeeping in Africa. It is crucial that the international community continues to support their efforts.

The increasing United Nations involvement and interest in peacekeeping in Africa prove that the international community has not turned its back on Africa. Indeed, compared to just two years ago, the situations in Ethiopia and Eritrea, Sierra Leone and the Great Lakes region have improved considerably. We also welcome the establishment of a Transitional Government in Burundi and the deployment of an interim security protection unit to facilitate the transition process, both of which have been supported by the United Nations in Security Council resolution 1375 (2001).

We are also pleased to learn of the United Nations Development Programme growth triangle pilot programme for Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia. Such initiatives facilitate good-neighbourliness and promote closer economic ties. We also agree with the Secretary-General's assessment on the need for an integrated subregional approach to be developed towards conflict prevention and peacekeeping. We therefore welcome the positive news of the decision to establish the United Nations Office in West Africa.

The recovery of Africa cannot be achieved by the sheer will of the people of Africa alone. Africa needs the international community's help if its efforts are to succeed. While Africa may have the will, and appreciate the urgency, to act, it clearly lacks the resources and technical knowledge that are also prerequisites for success. According to a 2001 report by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, foreign direct investment in Africa has continued to fall in the last few years, and has in fact gone below 1 per cent of the world total in 2000. Africa clearly finds itself on an uneven playing field with regard to trade and investment matters. The international community should try to create a level field for Africa.

Africa's problems have long preoccupied us. We are aware that, in an ever-shrinking world, what happens in one part of the world has an impact on every other part. In the case of Africa, we have the opportunity today to join its people in a critical partnership to fight poverty, underdevelopment and marginalization. Africa needs active international participation to support recovery efforts. We hope that today's debate will generate a stronger international commitment to help Africa.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Over the past year the United Nations and the international community at large have made fresh efforts in assisting Africa in preventing conflicts and promoting economic development. The Security Council has been giving priority to addressing hotspot issues and maintaining regional peace in Africa. The General Assembly's Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group has also done some useful work in this regard. However, conflicts in some parts of Africa have not yet ended. Many difficulties stand in the way of the fight against poverty, illiteracy and disease.

Conflicts in the African region have complex causes. Some have grown out of territorial, religious and ethnic disputes remaining from colonial times. Others have their roots in real problems such as poverty, underdevelopment and lack of peacekeeping capacity. Therefore, an integrated approach has to be adopted in the light of situations on the ground to address not only the symptoms but also the root causes.

In our view, no one in the world knows better than the Africans themselves how to seek a fundamental solution to African conflicts. Regional organizations such as the Organization of African Unity, the Economic Community of West African States and the Southern African Development Community, as well as the African countries themselves, are making unremitting efforts in solving and easing the conflicts in Africa. The international community should therefore take real action in providing the necessary political, economic and financial support in an effort to strengthen the capacity of African countries in the areas of conflict prevention, peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building. All efforts by the United Nations and the international community to the same end must be in keeping with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, the local realities and full respect for the will of the African countries and peoples.

Poverty, backwardness and general and economic underdevelopment are underlying causes of armed conflict and instability in the areas of Africa in question. It can well be said that the issue of Africa, in the final analysis, is a development issue. At present, developing countries are facing daunting tasks in reaching the development goals set by the United Nations Millennium Declaration. African countries have even greater difficulties in this regard due to the worsening of poverty and disease.

To attain durable peace in Africa, attention must be given not only to promoting solutions to hotspot issues but also, more fundamentally, to vigorously helping African countries to achieve development. Therefore, the United Nations should actively cooperate with relevant efforts by the African countries themselves, because development in Africa will benefit not only the continent but the rest of the world as well. The United Nations should intensify its efforts, increase inputs and play a greater role in the promotion of sustainable development in Africa.

The International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development to be held next year could be important opportunities for promoting the fulfilment of the development goals contained in the Millennium Declaration. We hope the two conferences will be able to achieve substantial progress in meeting the special needs of Africa and promoting sustainable development in the region. At the same time, we strongly appeal to the developed countries to take real action to meet as soon as possible the official development assistance targets of 0.7 per cent of their gross national product, to increase investment in Africa, to expand debt relief and cancellation programmes and to improve market access for African products so as to contribute to integrating Africa into the mainstream of world trade and economic development.

The Chinese Government has always attached importance and given support to African countries and peoples in their efforts to realize peace and development. As a developing country, China faces its own pressing problems and difficulties on the road to development. That is why China can better understand what Africa is confronted with and why China is willing to do all it can to assist Africa.

In this connection, China attaches importance to the follow-up to the China-Africa Cooperation Forum, which was held last year in Beijing. So far, we have signed debt exemption protocols with 21 African countries and have expanded personnel training programmes for African countries. Furthermore, the first high-level consultation on follow-up to the Forum has been held, which adopted, in principle, the mechanism and procedure of the follow-up to the China-Africa Cooperation Forum, as well as other documents. We are confident that, as such efforts deepen, the friendly cooperation between China and African countries will be further consolidated and developed.

Mr. Hønningstad (Norway): Norway welcomes the opportunity to discuss the follow-up of the important report by the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

The sad fact is that there are still a number of serious violent conflicts in Africa, and the continent continues to lag behind the rest of the world in economic and social development. The slow growth of African economies is one of the main obstacles to achieving sustainable development and improving the living conditions of the majority of the African people. Poverty is a cause as well as a consequence of violent conflicts and is endemic to many parts of Africa.

Norway welcomes the report of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa focusing on conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building and education.

In spite of a number of positive programmes and projects investing in human resources, the Working Group notes with concern that human resources capacity in many African countries remains weak and is inadequate for the challenges of the twenty-first century. The agreed international development goals of primary education for all by 2015 and of eliminating gender disparities in education by 2005 remain elusive for most African countries. In order to improve education in general, and education on human rights and democracy in particular, concerted commitment is needed to finance and implement comprehensive plans of action.

The educational needs of refugees, displaced persons and those in camps for the demobilized must be addressed as an integral part of peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building.

The Government of Norway is committed to increasing its support for education in developing countries and welcomes the suggestions by the Working Group for further action and measures to promote human resources development in Africa.

In paragraph 15 of his recent progress report on prevention of armed conflict, the Secretary-General underscored the need to intensify efforts to move from a "culture of reaction to one of prevention". The report focuses on the root causes of conflict and the need to develop long-term conflict prevention strategies. Peace-building is also an important part of the comprehensive approach to United Nations peace operations set forth in the Brahimi report. Peace-building is expected to be further elaborated on in the upcoming report of the Secretary-General, and we are looking forward to a comprehensive discussion of the challenges before us when the Council resumes its deliberation of this important issue.

Conflict prevention and peace-building must remain a key priority area for the United Nations. In this context, effective cooperation with regional organizations is important. Norway has for many years supported a strengthening of the peace-building capacity of the United Nations Secretariat and development agencies, and will continue to do so.

Although considerable efforts have been made to prevent and settle conflicts, the challenges of post-conflict peace-building remain daunting. The Working Group report lists a number of constraints on the effective implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report. These must be adequately addressed.

Norway welcomes the suggestions in the Working Group's report for further action to implement the Secretary-General's recommendations for promoting peace and sustainable development in Africa. While recognizing that the primary responsibility for achieving peace and sustainable development rests with African leaders and organizations, it is essential that the institutional capability and coordinating mechanisms of the United Nations are commensurate with the challenges we face so that we can act and react in a well-informed, coordinated, coherent, comprehensive and timely manner.

The United Nations, with its comprehensive mandate, must take the lead in designing ways and means that would make it easier to coordinate bilateral and regional efforts with those of the Organization. The issue of poverty needs to be addressed in peace processes in a comprehensive manner in country-specific situations. Post-conflict peace-building must be a vital element and an integral part of conflict management. Meeting the challenges of post-conflict peace-building requires a holistic approach and substantial financial resources. Cooperation on issues of conflict prevention and peace-building should be a priority issue in the consultations between the Presidents of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

Norway welcomes the efforts of African leaders to develop an African-owned and African-led framework for action aimed at the sustainable development of the African continent. We recommend that the General Assembly call upon the international community to support the initiative by African leaders for a New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which was adopted by the Organization of African Unity in Lusaka in July of this year. Through this initiative, African leaders are taking responsibility for leading the political and development processes. The initiative breaks with the traditional separation between the political, economic and social fields. It recognizes that peace, democracy, human rights and good governance are preconditions for development. In recognition of the close relationship between peace, security and sustainable development, a separate subcommittee has been set up by the NEPAD partners to focus on conflict prevention and resolution. Norway would like to congratulate the NEPAD partners on this decision.

The implementation of the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report is a priority area that must remain high on the agenda of the United Nations system and of the Member States. The General Assembly must continue to play the primary role in monitoring the implementations of the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report and in assessing the progress made.

Norway shares the view that for the Secretary-General to be able to present extensive annual reports to the General Assembly on this agenda item, a formalized structure and permanent focal point should be established within the Secretariat to closely monitor the progress achieved within the United Nations system. It is essential that the focal point be provided with the necessary human, managerial and administrative resources to allow it effectively to discharge its functions.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Despite the successive developments that the African continent has witnessed during the past years — be they positive or negative or related to the resolution of the conflicts on its territories or the promotion of economic and social development in its countries — we can now say with complete confidence that Africa has begun a new chapter in its contemporary history following the entry into force of the constitutive act of the African Union and the launching of the New African Initiative, which is now known as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). If these two events reflect the growing political awareness among the leaders of the African countries that they bear the primary responsibility for determining their future, then they must also be a point of departure for the international community to make efforts from now on to achieve lasting peace, promote democracy, good governance, economic well-being, social development and educational opportunities throughout the continent.

From this standpoint, we welcome the intention of the United Nations — in coordination with the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity — to review and assess the existing programme of cooperation between the two organizations and to modify it in a manner that assists Africa in developing the African Union and in establishing its new institutions. We also value the expressions of support by the international community for NEPAD, which is an initiative based on the determination of Africans to extricate themselves and their continent from the cycle of poverty and marginalization in an international environment characterized by globalization and economic and trade interdependence. We hope that this support will be translated into concrete measures and an international plan of action, with a specific timetable to be adopted in the General Assembly, to allow Africa to achieve the ambitious goals of this partnership and to address the many challenges that must be overcome.

The progress report of the Secretary-General addresses the efforts undertaken by the United Nations to respond to situations of conflict at their various

stages and to build durable peace and promote economic development on the continent. Allow me to briefly address a number of points that my delegation finds it important to highlight.

First, Egypt welcomes the growing awareness within the United Nations system of the necessity of addressing African conflicts at all their stages, starting with confronting the root causes that lead to the eruption of conflict through peacemaking efforts before a crisis escalates, then peacekeeping after a conflict has erupted and, finally, post-conflict peace-building to prevent their resumption. While Egypt appreciates the role played by the United Nations to comprehensively address certain crises on the continent and resolve some conflicts after they have erupted — as is now the case in West Africa in general, and in Sierra Leone in particular — it also believes that the response of the United Nations has not been balanced in a few other cases.

The situation in Somalia, for example, cannot continue as it has been without the international community assuming its responsibilities to restore peace and stability to this country that has suffered from a lack of serious international efforts whether for peacemaking among its factions, or for peacekeeping on its territory or for peace-building within its society.

Secondly, African leaders have committed themselves to enhancing existing mechanisms to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts at the subregional and continental levels and to ensuring that these mechanisms are used to restore and maintain peace in the continent. The African leaders have also decided to maintain the objectives and principles enshrined in the Cairo Declaration, establishing the Organization of African Unity Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution as an integral part of the objectives and principles of the African Union.

If Africa is to succeed in playing a more effective role in confronting the increasing challenges imposed by the complex nature of the conflicts on its territories, then it must also expect the international community to increase its support for efforts undertaken in the continent, be it in the context of the OAU/African Union or its subregional organizations or by a coalition of interested African States. This support could be given particularly through generous contributions to the two trust funds established by the OAU and the United Nations for this purpose, as well as through activities to develop the continent's capabilities in the field of early warning and through the provision of financial, military and logistical support to the missions deployed by the OAU, as undertaken in the Comoros and the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Thirdly, despite the expansion of the role played by the OAU to resolve the ongoing conflicts in the continent and even the development of its own capacities that enable it to play a more effective role in this field, we must not forget that there are many cases that require — or that will require — the involvement of the international community with all its influence and the assumption by the United Nations of all its responsibilities to maintain peace and security in Africa when Africans are unable to do so themselves.

Here it is important for us to reaffirm that the peacekeeping operations that the United Nations establishes in Africa — like the existing operations in the Balkans region and East Timor — must receive the necessary military, human, financial and logistical support commensurate with the complex nature of conflicts in Africa. They must also remain deployed in the mission area, without the Security Council withdrawing them, until the situation in the country stabilizes or until their departure is followed by the development of an international framework for peace-building in the country. That can be done through the application of the concepts agreed in the context of what is now known as "no exit without a strategy".

Fourthly, at the same time, if African countries, individually and collectively, wish to enhance their own capabilities in the area of peacekeeping in the continent, then we must also express our deep regret at the dangerous tendency that has taken root before our very eyes, which is embodied in the refusal of influential Western nations, particularly those with the requisite major military capabilities, to participate with their troops and military contingents in the operations that the Security Council establishes in Africa.

We therefore insist that efforts to implement the Brahimi recommendations and to enhance the capacities of the United Nations and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations be coupled with the explicit and clear commitment of Western States to be prepared to demonstrate the required political will to contribute, and if need be to sacrifice, their personnel alongside

the personnel of African countries and other developing nations that have not hesitated to contribute to the success of existing operations both within and outside the continent.

Fifthly, as we approach the fourth and final preparatory meeting of the International Conference on Financing for Development, scheduled to take place in Mexico next March, we wish to stress the importance of paying special attention to Africa, specifically to the issues on the agenda related to the least developed African countries. These include increasing the scope and efficiency of official development assistance, helping African countries to attract foreign direct investment and extricating them from the vicious cycle of the heavy debt crisis.

We also wish to focus particularly on providing all necessary assistance in order to enhance the institutional capacities of African countries. This should be done in parallel with measures to enable more effective African participation in economic decision-making mechanisms at the international level, thus ensuring a balance of interests among partners in development and contributing to the establishment of a more just, peaceful and stable African continent and world.

Despite the recommendation to suspend the activities of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa during the current session of the General Assembly, we reaffirm the need for the Assembly, as the primary deliberative and legislative organ of the United Nations, to continue to monitor implementation of the Secretary-General's recommendations. We thus stress the need for the Secretariat to constantly inform Member States of the efforts undertaken by the United Nations system in this area, and we hope that the Secretary-General will provide the necessary human and administrative resources to the Task Force led by Mr. Ibrahim Gambari. We thank him for his efforts in providing this report for other efforts aimed at developing the African continent and helping it face its challenges. This Task Force, led by Ambassador Gambari, will soon become the permanent focal point within the Secretariat charged with undertaking this role.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): At the outset, let me thank you, Mr. President, and also the Secretary-General for the progress report that we have before us on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General. This, together with the report of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa, are excellent inputs for today's debate.

My Spanish colleague, Ambassador Arias, and I draw particular satisfaction from the fact that we were associated with the Ad Hoc Working Group during the year under review as Vice-Chairmen under the stewardship of President Harri Holkeri, who took personal interest in the activities of the Working Group and ensured the timely finalization of its report, which is before us.

I must also acknowledge the assistance that we have received from Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, Under-Secretary-General and Adviser on Africa. We are grateful for the assistance that he and his staff in the Secretariat have provided us.

The objective of achieving peace and development in Africa has been on the priority list of the international community for more than a decade. Virtually no international meeting or conference has adopted a document without giving special attention to that continent. Principal organs of the United Nations — the Economic and Social Council, the Security Council and the General Assembly — have constantly focused on the problems of Africa in the context of their respective mandates and have also established their own follow-up mechanisms. In addition, scores of multilateral and bilateral initiatives have been launched to promote the development of Africa. And the General Assembly, as we all know, with the same objective in view, established its Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group. Since its establishment in 1998, the Working Group has remained actively engaged in monitoring the implementation of United Nations initiatives for peace and development in Africa.

The Working Group has been deliberating all United Nations initiatives on Africa; during the year under review it adopted a more focused approach, addressing two key areas, namely education, and conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building. As is evident from its report, the Working Group made significant progress on the task mandated to it.

The Working Group rightly recognized that, as Africa's future lies in its people, it must therefore invest in them, particularly in their education. The Working Group considered education to be an engine of African economic growth and development. However, it also considered that human resource development cannot be addressed in isolation. Overall peace and security and sustained economic growth are also crucial for promoting African development.

The Working Group recognized that underdevelopment coupled with continued conflict is making Africa's prospects for development bleak. Consequently, Africa is the poorest region of the world, accounting for less than 2 per cent of the world's trade. That statement can be substantiated by the fact that during 1997 the combined income of 48 countries of Africa was less than the income of one small developed country in Europe. The situation has not improved since then. Only this year, another African country was added to the list of least developed countries. Over the years, the number of conflicts in Africa has continued to multiply. Since 1960, nearly 20 African countries have experienced fratricidal conflict. Today, about one fifth of the African population is living in a conflict situation. Inter-State and intra-State conflicts have caused indescribable human suffering. Conflict entails heavy social and economic costs not only for the affected countries but also for their neighbours. In addition to its direct economic and human costs, continued conflict leads to a significant increase in crimes and violence, both of which detract from development in many ways. Conflict also disrupts agricultural activities, and this is exacerbated by the fact that 60 per cent of Africa is vulnerable to drought.

The Working Group rightly pointed out that the challenges in Africa are formidable. We believe that those challenges are not insurmountable. Many regions of the world have overcome such difficulties, and so can Africa — of course, with the support of the international community. The international community must therefore extend the requisite helping hand to regional and national efforts for the achievement of the twin goals of peace and development in the African region. Africa alone would find it difficult to face these formidable challenges. We therefore need to assist Africa in addressing the root causes of conflict. This requires a concerted international effort at two levels. In the first instance, there is a need to focus on the underlying political and security aspects of instability in that continent. In parallel, economic and social problems afflicting parts of Africa need to be tackled through a comprehensive assistance programme with adequate resources. But assistance loses its value if it is burdened with conditionalities or motivated by political returns. Neither peace nor development should be held to ransom.

While Africa is making its efforts to catch up with the rest of the world, it deserves the international community's full support in its endeavours. Here, I would like to support the call for the provision of adequate and unconditional resources for social sector needs of African countries. Africa needs sufficient investment to provide education for all. All institutional stakeholders need to participate in developing this vision for Africa.

We are satisfied that during the past two years the Working Group has played an active role in highlighting the urgent need to address the causes of conflict and the promotion of sustainable development in Africa. We sincerely hope that those efforts will be made sustainable through the putting in place of a permanent monitoring mechanism.

Without enhanced official development assistance, increased investment, a durable solution to the external debt burden, market access for products and services from the African region and integration of the African countries into the global economy, efforts to attain the goals of durable peace and sustainable development are not likely to make any headway.

Human resource development remains a major challenge for African countries. Special programmes should be launched for capacity building and for promoting education and literacy. The international community should strengthen efforts to transfer technology to Africa on concessional and preferential terms.

The Working Group this year, focused as it was on education and on conflict prevention and peace-building, has provided us with a number of important, action-oriented recommendations to achieve the twin goals of peace and development in Africa. We need to follow up those recommendations. To do so it will be necessary to strengthen and reinforce the existing set-up within the Secretariat dealing with the problems and needs of Africa. The international community, particularly the United Nations system, should take all necessary measures to support African efforts.

particularly the New Partnership for Africa's Development launched at Abuja in October 2001.

Pakistan continues to support all United Nations initiatives that would bring peace and prosperity to Africa. We have consistently supported United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa. We have participated on a large scale in these operations. Our military and civilian personnel have been part of United Nations operations in Somalia, Namibia, Liberia, Western Sahara, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We have a binding commitment to our partnership with Africa. I was personally privileged to be part of this partnership in my capacity as one of the two Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa.

As in the past, Pakistan will continue to lend its moral and material support to the development efforts of the African countries. Our Technical Assistance Programme for Africa is an ongoing process of training young professionals in diverse fields. As soon as the South Institute of Information Technology is established in Pakistan, we will be in a position to offer special training facilities in information technology for students from Africa.

African people have suffered for too long. The challenges faced by Africa are colossal. We genuinely need to launch a global action to ensure that the internationally agreed goals for Africa are achieved over a specified time frame. Words — not lengthy reports — are needed, and words should be turned into deeds. Otherwise, the suffering of Africa will continue unabated.

The international community must launch a concerted effort to promote peace and sustainable development in the African continent. This is our moral obligation and political responsibility.

Mr. Effah-Apenteng (Ghana): I should like to commend the Chairman of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa, former President of the General Assembly Mr. Harri Holkeri, and the two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassadors Ahmad and Arias, for the effective manner in which they carried out their responsibility. We found the report of the Working Group very well done. My delegation also thanks the Secretary-General for his report.

Once again, we have an opportunity to address the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. This time, however, we do so against the background of the upcoming review and appraisal of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and, more significantly, the adoption by African leaders of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

As a framework for a comprehensive and integrated approach to Africa's development, developed by Africans themselves, NEPAD, in our view, provides the frame of reference for all activities to be undertaken by the international community in support of Africa's development efforts. This was recognized by the 2001 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council in Geneva and is also highlighted in the report of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group that is before us today.

The coincidence of the premise underlying both NEPAD and the Secretary-General's report underscores the enduring relevance of the report and the importance of the exercise to monitor implementation of the recommendations contained in it. How the United Nations and the international community address the critical nexus between peace and development and the issues of conflict prevention, poverty eradication and development remains to be determined. The need for implementation of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report, within a holistic framework, however, remains a priority and must be treated as such within the United Nations.

The assessment of the two themes selected by the Working Group reveals that the priority tag attached to the implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report has not been matched by the requisite political will. The two themes, conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building, and education, are crucial components for achieving durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

As the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Mr. Koichiro Matsuura, stated at the World Education Forum, held in Dakar, Senegal, last year, education "is

the essential bedrock for the building of sustainable peace and development". In the area of education, however, despite the efforts made by African countries with support from the United Nations system and the international community, a great deal remains to be done. The report of the Working Group notes that "human resource capacity in many African countries remains weak and inadequate to respond to the challenges of the twenty-first century" (*A/56/45, para. 18*).

Indeed, the report goes on to report low rates of educational enrolment at all levels of education and the deterioration in the quality of education as well as persisting gender disparities.

The factors accounting for this unenviable situation are many, including the failure of some African countries to accord priority to education or redefine their educational needs to reflect the yearnings of their societies and the demands of a knowledge-based global economy. Yet two of the most critical factors — the impact of macro-reforms and structural adjustment programmes and inadequate external support for capacity-building — emanate from policies pushed by the international community.

Undoubtedly, progress in delivering debt relief, coupled with enhanced market access for African countries, would enable those countries to make the necessary investments in education, which would support growth and development.

It is clear from the data, however, that resources alone are not the key to achieving the educational objectives of African countries. African policy makers need to put an increasing focus on curriculum development to promote nation-building and an attachment to the values of democracy. Education must create the bonds of an inclusive society and must be innovative enough to cover not only the formal educational system but also the non-formal, which covers the truly marginalized in society. Finally, education must be responsive to economic opportunity, particularly the need for science education, and, in this regard, its design must involve Governments, civil society and the private sector.

We believe that the fastest and most effective way for Africa to achieve its educational goals is by adopting flexible and cost-effective, or less expensive, delivery systems. Information and communication technology provides a defining opportunity for Africa to provide instruction and knowledge universally, without being constrained by the limitations of inadequate manpower and structural resources. The information and communication technology challenge, in the context of the pursuit of peace and sustainable development, requires that we build a coalition, a partnership that reflects the promise of technology and the depth of our commitment to address an issue so critical to our concerns over Africa.

We support the general approach that focuses on conflict prevention, particularly on the development of effective preventive mechanisms. We note in this connection that considerable work has to be done to develop a coordinated and global approach to conflict prevention. We are particularly hopeful that the establishment of an Inter-Agency Task Force for West Africa and the dispatch of a Mission to that region constitute a leap forward in terms of lessons learned.

We are similarly supportive of the initiatives to set up United Nations offices in certain countries in Africa. Paragraphs 27 to 32 of the report give details of the efforts made in the prevention and settlement of conflicts in Africa.

Notwithstanding these efforts, it is obvious, as the report rightly states, that the challenges of post-conflict peace-building remain daunting. We agree with the conclusions of the Working Group on the factors which have impeded the implementation of the Secretary-General's report in this area.

While we recognize that good governance — including the respect and promotion of human rights, accountability of leaders and respect for democratic freedoms — are essential prerequisites for peace, and while we expect the small number of African countries where these conditions do not obtain to shoulder their responsibilities, we cannot ignore the simple fact that poverty, underdevelopment and weak institutional capacity are absolutely critical factors in creating the conditions that lead to conflict.

Any useful assessment of this component must therefore address the impact of macroeconomic policies, including unconsidered liberalization, particularly at the international level, on countries susceptible to conflict.

Regrettably, the financial support given by rich countries for post-conflict rehabilitation and the reintegration of demobilized soldiers, as well as to

countries of the region that are shouldering peacekeeping and peace-building responsibilities in Africa, has been comparatively inadequate. As a community, we must ask why it is that we are able to mobilize massive resources when conflicts erupt, even though we were not able to raise a fraction of those resources when those conflicts could still have been prevented.

Member States also need to question their own contribution to the ineffectiveness of the United Nations in addressing aspects of conflict prevention in Africa. The failure, for whatever reason, of the organs dealing with development and peace to coordinate their activities is an impediment to our effectiveness.

Similarly, we believe that a well-coordinated approach by the United Nations departments and agencies dealing with African issues is essential to achieving the objectives of the Secretary-General's recommendations. We note in this regard the excellent work done by Mr. Gambari, Under-Secretary-General and Adviser on Africa, in coordinating the Secretariat's contribution to the Working Group. We would like to encourage greater coordination on African matters.

We call for urgent consideration of the creation of an ad hoc advisory group on countries emerging from conflict in Africa, in order to assess their humanitarian and economic needs and to develop a long-term programme of support integrating relief into development.

I have already made reference to the acute relevance of the process of review and appraisal of the New Agenda and of the implementation of NEPAD to the implementation, monitoring and future assessment of the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report.

Ghana supports the proposal in the Working Group's report to suspend the activities of the Working Group during the fifty-sixth session in order to consider further measures for the implementation and monitoring of initiatives on Africa. The Working Group, in the light of the outcome of that exercise, would re-examine its mandate during the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

We believe that a coordinated and integrated approach for monitoring implementation should be taken by the Interdepartmental/Inter-Agency Task Force, in the capacity of Secretariat focal point, for the consideration of the General Assembly. In order to do its work effectively, the Task Force needs to be strengthened with human and financial resources.

We find ourselves at a particularly auspicious moment as we review the processes of United Nations support for Africa. The leaders of the continent have produced their own development initiative, considered by the entire international community as credible, comprehensive and doable. We at the United Nations must respond to the challenge by ensuring that our decisions on the way forward match our commitment to an enhanced partnership with Africa.

Mr. Lee Ho-jin (Republic of Korea): The Republic of Korea wishes to extend its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his concise report (A/56/371) on the implementation of the recommendations contained in his 1998 report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

Africa as a whole has made significant economic and political advances in recent years, but in many parts of the continent Africa remains threatened and its progress impeded by conflicts. The consequences of those conflicts have seriously undermined Africa's efforts to ensure long-term stability, prosperity and peace for its peoples. Needless to say, conflict prevention begins and ends with the promotion of human security and of sustained development.

The causes of conflicts range from historical legacies to internal and external factors to special motivations. I believe that abject poverty and underdevelopment are one of the main causes of the frustrating conflicts in many subregions of Africa. Ending the vicious circle of poverty and conflicts is therefore a demanding challenge indeed. According to 2001 *World Economic and Social Survey* published by the United Nations, the annual growth rate of Africa's gross domestic product has been a mere 3 per cent for the last four consecutive years. It is also discouraging to note that the continent suffers from dwindling external financial resources, debt hangover, the HIV/AIDS pandemic and reduced export earnings.

The international community has made untiring efforts to address the African challenges. Thanks to United Nations peacekeeping activities, the frequency and magnitude of regional conflicts have shown substantially decreasing trends. The special needs of Africa have been repeatedly recognized in major

United Nations initiatives and conferences and, in particular, at the Millennium Summit held last year.

In this context, the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa and its follow-up actions are particularly commendable. Throughout the process, earlier findings were reconfirmed: that peace, democracy and good governance are prerequisites for sustainable development in Africa, and that comprehensive strategies need to be developed to address the root causes of conflicts.

A remarkable event in the African development process was the adoption of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) by the Abuja Summit, held in October 2001. NEPAD is particularly valuable, as it was designed by African leaders themselves and presents a comprehensive strategy for socio-economic and political development based on a market mechanism and on the common values of democracy and good governance.

Given these inherently multifaceted challenges, the United Nations should continue to play a leading role in coordinating divergent activities and in assisting African countries to achieve peace, security and sustained economic development. In this regard, I would like to stress the following aspects, among others.

First, there is pressing need to end armed conflicts, which prevent political, social and economic development in Africa. Our experience has confirmed that peace, democracy, human rights and development are complementary and mutually reinforcing. It is crucial to adopt an integrated approach comprising peacemaking, peace-building and post-conflict rehabilitation. To this end, it is important to mobilize the political will to translate rhetoric into reality.

Secondly, we must make continued efforts to support NEPAD, which is creating true ownership of its development process and is aimed at the eradication of poverty in Africa. It is encouraging to note that the G-8 summit held last July agreed to launch a comprehensive development plan, which certainly supports NEPAD. The United Nations system should also take coherent and well-coordinated approaches in support of African initiatives for the years to come. The statement of support by the Secretary-General and the decision by the Administrative Committee on Coordination in April to support only African-led and African-owned development plans, such as those that culminated in NEPAD, committed the whole United Nations system to such an approach.

Thirdly, in order to secure durable peace and economic development, substantial assistance needs to be provided to improve governance, infrastructure, capacity-building and human resources development. In particular, the role of education and training is ever more important in the emerging knowledge-based economy. In order to achieve the development goals set out in NEPAD, necessary resources, both domestic and foreign, must be mobilized. At the domestic level, an adequate environment should be provided for mobilizing national and foreign resources, while donors are requested to expand their support.

In conclusion, the next step will be for us to devote ourselves to the appraisal of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) through the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole. The Republic of Korea hopes that the 10-year review of UN-NADAF will address Africa's development in more comprehensive manner, including issues of peace, security and sustainable development and supporting NEPAD.

Next year will be important for dealing with issues of development and poverty eradication, as two crucial international conferences will be held: the Monterrey Conference and the Johannesburg Summit. The Republic of Korea will continue to join the international effort to address durable peace, security and development in Africa.

Mr. De Ruyt (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey align themselves with this statement.

Africa is a priority for the European Union. Our strategic partnership was reaffirmed and consolidated in April 2000 at the Africa-Europe Summit in Cairo. The ministerial meeting following up the Cairo Summit, held just a few weeks ago in Brussels, once again confirmed the commitment of the heads of State of the European Union and Africa to work towards a

new strategic dimension for a comprehensive partnership between Africa and Europe.

That mid-term ministerial review enabled us to, inter alia, welcome the important work done in finding common ground on priority issues identified in the follow-up to the Cairo Summit, namely, conflict resolution, human rights, democracy and good governance, food security, AIDS, regional integration, the environment, debt and the restitution of cultural property. The results of this work will, of course, also be relevant in our discussions here on this agenda item.

The European Union would like first of all to thank the Secretary-General for his progress report on the implementation of his recommendations on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. We also encourage him to continue to develop the web site of the Ad Hoc Working Group, which in due course could become a working and reference tool.

The fact that Africa is the continent with the greatest number of conflicts, as well as the most significant development challenges, clearly shows that the philosophy underlying the Secretary-General's report of April 1998 (A/52/871) — namely, the importance of an integrated approach towards Africa — has remained entirely relevant. In fact, it has just been reaffirmed by our ministers in the declaration following the high-level debate in the Economic and Social Council.

Indeed, if it is true that peace alone does not make it possible to eradicate poverty, it no less true that there can be no real progress in the fight against poverty without lasting peace. There is no doubt that the Organization of African Unity will have an important role to play in this respect. The European Union agrees, however, that the subregional level will offer more opportunities to translate these general concepts into practical and integrated action on the ground, and it awaits with interest the Secretary-General's report to the Economic and Social Council on the Organization's various means of subregional coordination. In this connection, the European Union welcomed the dispatch of an inter-agency mission to West Africa in March 2001.

Regarding the part of the report dealing with conflict situations, the European Union very much appreciates the efforts being made by the Secretary-General to refine the instruments available to him and to broaden their use. Many of his initiatives are aimed at ensuring a more united and consistent response from the international community.

Conflicts in Africa have indeed become increasingly complex, involving a multitude of actors with widely diverging intentions. The appointment of mediators and the establishment of contact groups help to formulate a coordinated approach that is suited to the complexity of the situation. Increasingly, negotiation and mediation efforts are being undertaken by the African countries themselves. We believe that this is a positive development. At the same time, however, a close link must be maintained with the United Nations so that such efforts are realistic and their results in keeping with the capacity of the United Nations. Indeed, a key feature of truly effective cooperation is mutual respect for each other's capacities.

There is no doubt that the international community must be determined in tackling the economic interests which underlie the various conflicts in Africa. The exploitation of natural resources fuels war and defies the political responses formulated by the international community. The European Union fully supports the establishment of more rigorous monitoring of the observance of sanctions by setting up new mechanisms, such as panels of experts. But it remains essential to improve the coordination of such efforts and to avoid any duplication or overlap that might result from the simultaneous existence of several panels and mechanisms.

The European Union stresses the importance of multilateral instruments for disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. It encourages African countries to join existing instruments and to take all measures for effective follow-up. The problem of small arms is also of relevance in Africa. The European Union has participated actively in the fight against the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of small arms. Through its Joint Action, it has made commitments relating to the collection, control and destruction of such weapons, the promotion of disarmament and the demobilization and reintegration of former combatants.

The European Union is strongly committed to strengthening Africa's peacekeeping capacities. It encourages closer United Nations involvement in this area. Paragraph 8 of the Secretary-General's report mentions consultations with Member States on the

elaboration of terms of reference with a view to the formation of a working group to act as a forum for exchanging information. As far as we are aware, these consultations began in 1999 but have not been pursued. The European Union is in favour of such a working group and calls on the Secretariat to resume these consultations with States from both the African continent and elsewhere.

With regard to a special consultative group for countries emerging from conflict, the European Union does not want to engage in a debate here in the General Assembly on the proposal to create such a group. In conformity with the ministerial declaration to which I have referred, this question will be the subject of a debate in the Economic and Social Council in the first trimester of 2002. The European Union would not like to prejudge here any decision that belongs primarily to the Council.

With respect to building durable peace and promoting economic growth, and more particularly good governance, the European Union subscribes fully to the Secretary-General's analysis regarding the importance of transparent, accountable and effective public administration. Efforts to fight corruption as well as to promote decentralization, consolidation of democracy and respect for the rule of law are important aspects of national policies leading to the creation of such administration. These national efforts also help spread an environment that is favourable for development.

The importance of the role of the private sector goes without saying. We take note here of the various initiatives intended to strengthen it, and we encourage the United Nations system to continue along that path. Increasing the investment in human resources, health systems and the fight against contagious diseases, primarily AIDS but also malaria and tuberculosis, is an absolute priority for the continent.

As for the question of resources, the Union recognizes the catalysing role of official development assistance. The Union will therefore continue to support debt relief initiatives within the framework of the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative. Access of African countries to markets in developed countries also constitutes an important aspect of their economic development. The Union is convinced that its initiative to open its market unilaterally to the least developed countries — the "Everything but arms" initiative — and the future economic partnership agreements will contribute to that end.

With regard to the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group, the European Union welcomes the way it has worked this year. At the suggestion of the Bureau, the Working Group has discussed important, targeted themes for the African continent: how best to prevent the conflicts that might emerge there, what might be the most effective means to consolidate what is often too fragile a peace, and how to reinforce the education of youth and young adults so that they are better prepared to face the challenges of today — violence, globalization, poverty, AIDS. Member States' discussions have been particularly enriched by the valuable contributions from non-governmental organizations, and we would like to take this opportunity to thank them.

The recommendations of the Secretary-General contained in the 1998 report deserve continued follow-up, but it must be effective. It is now time for all of us to reflect together on an improved rationalization of African initiatives within the United Nations. The Group took a sensible decision in this regard: it agreed on a year of reflection. Like our African partners, the European Union hopes that the coming year will prove fruitful and that new ideas will emerge to strengthen the coherence of United Nations activities in Africa. We have full confidence in the staff of the Interdepartmental/Inter-Agency Task Force directed by Under-Secretary-General Ibrahim Gambari to assist us in this undertaking.

In the same context, we congratulate the Administrative Committee on Coordination on its decision to no longer consider further initiatives concerning Africa, and to work towards a unified framework for action based on the rationalization of existing initiatives. The final examination and evaluation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s will be an opportunity for us to examine together all the initiatives launched in Africa.

The European Union is hopeful that our discussions on this agenda item will also be marked by the new enthusiasm felt in the African continent since the meeting of heads of State and Government in Lusaka last July. It is encouraging that our discussions can take place in the light of a new recovery plan for

Africa, coming from Africa itself, the New African Initiative. In this context, we also welcome the Abuja summit on 23 October, which made it possible to consolidate this New Partnership for Africa's Development and take the first series of operational decisions. This New Partnership shows clearly that the African countries are ready to take control of their own development. It also stresses the importance of peace and security and recognizes democracy, transparency, sound public administration, the authority of law and human rights as fundamental factors in development.

It is now a matter for all development partners to support them in this effort. We welcome the support expressed by the United Nations system for the implementation of the New Partnership at the recent meeting of the Administrative Committee on Coordination in New York. At their meeting on 10 October, the European Union and the heads of State of Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa expressed their strong determination to set up links between the institutional frameworks of the New African Initiative and the European Union and to develop a regular dialogue about the evolution of the New Initiative. The Union reaffirms its willingness to continue its cooperation with the United Nations with a view to responding to the challenges confronting Africa.

Mr. Johnson (United States of America): The Secretary-General stated in his report on the causes of conflict and promotion of durable peace and sustainable development, that Africa as a whole has begun to make significant economic and political progress. The advances achieved in some countries are truly remarkable and need to be remembered when we focus on those countries where development has not moved forward.

The 2001 United Nations Development Programme *Human Development Report* shows that much progress has been made over the last 30 years. More people than ever are enjoying the benefits of clean water, better health, access to education and a decent income. It also shows that conflict has a devastating impact on progress. Nearly 1 billion people do not have access to safe drinking water, 11 million children below age 5 still die every year from preventable causes, 325 million children who should be in primary or secondary schools are not, and 1.2 billion people still live on less than $1 a day. Too many of these are in Africa. Too many African countries are affected by the development catastrophe caused by current and recent armed conflict.

Decades-long conflicts in some countries have visited extreme hardship on their inhabitants and have contributed to regional instability. In addition to the enormous human suffering involved, conflict has severe long-term economic and social consequences, as it destroys the building blocks of development. It is relatively easy to restore basic infrastructure after a conflict has ended. It is much more difficult to restore trust. Lack of trust among the people hampers efforts to institute democratic governance and transparent institutions and, hence, human development. Lack of trust in the wider environment, whether near neighbour or distant trading partner, impedes economic growth.

The Secretary-General in his report calls for substantial and sustainable economic growth and social development. His report on the implementation of the recommendations certainly indicates that a great many multilateral and bilateral efforts have been launched over the years. Inputs have been substantial, but whether they have been instrumental in creating sustainable economic growth and human development is not easily determined. Except in areas such as school attendance and child/mother mortality, where some progress indicators are available, no report or review provides a clear overview of whether the impact on economic growth and human development of each effort has been positive.

We appreciate the good work done by the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group in monitoring the implementation of recommendations, but it is not surprising that it has found the job daunting. We have endorsed Chairman Holkeri's suggestion that the Working Group format is not the most effective tool and that it take a one-year time out to take advantage of the review and appraisal of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. We will work with our colleagues to ensure that monitoring continues on a regular and cost-effective basis if the General Assembly agrees that the already-established Interdepartmental/Inter-Agency Task Force should be the focal point for monitoring the implementation of the recommendations. Additional human resources should be seconded from other African initiatives, such as the special unit on Africa.

In the context of the comprehensive New Partnership for Africa's Development and with a view

to reducing the number of overlapping initiatives, we ask that the Secretary-General consider recommending that several initiatives slated for review and appraisal, such as the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa, not be renewed. The recent international focus on Africa, welcome as it is, has created numerous development initiatives. We share the Secretary-General's concern that the proliferation of such initiatives results in the duplication of effort and the diffusion of resources.

We commend African leaders for the work that has gone into the creation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development. We support the concept of an African-led plan for sustainable development that would include among its core goals conflict resolution, good governance, economic growth and sound economic management. We are prepared to work with African nations and the Organization of African Unity to implement these goals and we look forward to a working relationship in the future.

Mr. Amer (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): In 1998, the Secretary-General issued his report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. In that document, he made a number of recommendations to address issues ranging from post-conflict peace-building to the mobilization of resources for development, as well as a comprehensive and integrated programme for conflict prevention, the eradication of poverty and the realization of development.

It is a source of satisfaction to us that, three years later, the report continues to attract much interest in the international community and the United Nations. The General Assembly has established the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa to monitor the implementation of the Secretary-General's recommendations and to assess the obstacles hindering it and ways to overcome them. The Security Council and many other international bodies, including the Economic and Social Council, have taken up the report.

I wish on this occasion to express my appreciation to all those bodies for their consideration of the economic, social and political causes of conflict in Africa. I wish to pay a special tribute to the Secretary-General, who has always supported African efforts for peace and development. He has dispatched envoys, called for the mobilization of resources for post-conflict peace-building and encouraged African organizations to intervene in conflicts and settle them.

As we discuss the situation in Africa, many facts highlight the successful efforts of African countries to settle disputes on the continent and to extinguish the fires of war in many States. We can point to success stories in Sierra Leone, Somalia and Burundi and there is much hope for the restoration of peace and national reconciliation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development adopted in July shows the commitment of African leaders to establishing conflict prevention, management and settlement mechanisms, to achieving democracy and to defending human rights. Furthermore, the foundation of the African Union opens a new chapter in Africa's history and will lead to the building of a united continent of peace in which every effort is made to achieve economic and social development for the sons of Africa in all its regions.

We in Libya, having contributed to all these achievements, must again stress that the growing role of Africa does not exempt the international community from its responsibility to help the continent to overcome its difficulties and to promote its capacities. Former colonial Powers have essential obligations in that regard. They invaded Africa and divided it into States through treaties signed among themselves. They divided its tribes and communities, leading to political instability in many regions and to an economic backwardness throughout the continent. The least those Powers can do is to apologize to the Africans and to compensate them for psychological harm and for pillaging their wealth for centuries.

While welcoming the importance being given to African issues in international bodies, my delegation believes that the proof will be in the concrete measures taken to promote Africa's efforts to achieve peace and to end the conflicts taking place in some of its regions, which continue to damage economic and social infrastructures. In order to face up to these situations, it is very important to improve early warning mechanisms, deal with the problems related to the illicit trade in weapons, encourage regional and subregional African organizations to find peaceful

settlements to disputes and promote their capabilities to prevent the eruption of new conflicts.

The causes of conflict are numerous and multifaceted. Poverty is an essential element in most conflicts, and must be taken into consideration in Africa. Three hundred million people on the African continent live on less than $1 per day. A strategic pillar of sustainable development consists of raising Africans' standard of living and attaining the goal of reducing Africa's poverty rate by half by 2015. This means that the international community must give the utmost priority to African efforts for economic growth that would reduce poverty. In this regard, it is important to alleviate the external debt burden, which is a problem in most States of the continent. It is also important to assist Africa to diversify its export products, eliminate customs tariffs on African products and help it effectively to join the international trading system by opening doors to its exports in international markets. Moreover, the trend in official development assistance must be reversed and the target of allocating 0.7 per cent of developed countries' gross national product to official development assistance must be reached.

In the report contained in document A/56/45, the Working Group sets out a number of recommendations to promote education in Africa, as education is central to preventing conflict, promoting peace and preventing the spread of disease. My delegation is convinced that the deteriorating state of education in Africa is one of the reasons for the slow pace of sustainable economic growth on the continent. We support the Working Group's recommendations in this regard. We would like to stress that the international community must support Africa's efforts to attain gender parity and make education available to everyone by 2015, as well as its efforts in information and communications technology.

It has become very clear that public health issues, and problems related to AIDS in particular, are no longer mere medical issues. The economic and social repercussions of AIDS are numerous and very serious. This disease threatens millions of people in Africa and has shown itself to be a threat to sustainable development. African States are aware of the dangers of this lethal disease and have met at the summit level to develop measures to deal with it. Those measures include the establishment of the African research centre on controlling communicable diseases, whose expenses Colonel Muammar Al-Qadhafi has offered to cover in large part. We hope that this initiative will encourage others to follow suit.

In that regard, it is commendable that the United Nations has made the struggle against AIDS a major component of its programmes. The General Assembly has met in special session to consider this issue; the International Atomic Energy Agency is making efforts to modernize diagnosis of the disease; and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations have had numerous successes in this area.

We believe that AIDS is a threat to be confronted by States, pharmaceutical companies and international organizations, including international financial organizations. We also believe that the cost of drugs is unreasonable. The disease cannot wait for solutions to this issue; drugs must be provided at reasonable cost or at no cost for those who cannot afford them.

In conclusion, my delegation agrees with the proposals of the Working Group contained in the last part of its report, entitled "Need for follow-up". We look forward to the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, when the Working Group will take up its mandate anew. Finally, I cannot fail to express my delegation's appreciation for the work done by the Working Group last year, especially the work done by the Chairman and his two Vice-Chairmen, from Pakistan and Spain, who contributed greatly to the success of the Working Group's activities.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.